

Spilsbury called up the local bank manager, but "it had all been done over his head, from back east." Simultaneously, Baker bribed officials in Ottawa to the tune of \$25,000 in unmarked bills. Financed by what Spilsbury calls his "big money boys," Baker bought QCA for \$1.4 million in July 1955, merging it with PWA. "This was not competitive victory," Spilsbury concludes, "it was outright purchase. You can purchase anything your heart desires if Daddy is rich enough."

Something of a professional Englishman, Spilsbury found all this utterly appalling. "I was brought up in the old English style which taught you that if you come from a good family and behaved like a gentleman, that was enough; you could count on the right sort of people to see it and you didn't have to sell yourself." The right sort of people may have helped Spilsbury get from Savary Island to Vancouver, but they could not help him on Parliament Hill. The moral of the story is that a boy from the West Coast can succeed in business as long as he restricts his operations to a modest scale and to his own turf, keeps out of the way of corrupt politicians and big money boys, and spends as little time as possible "on bended knee in that godforsaken outpost called Ottawa."

Altogether the book makes a revealing if an uncomfortable read. The joy and levity of *Spilsbury's Coast* is largely lacking and is replaced with serious political drama and more than a little justified bitterness towards Baker and his backers. The two-page index, however, is execrable; a glossary of aviation acronyms would have been handy; and new material is presented that belonged in the first volume, such as the year his father came to Canada (1889) and the date his family moved to Savary Island (1913).

The book deserves to be where it is, on the best-seller lists. Spilsbury has a raconteur's eye for an anecdote, a keen sense of history, an earthy sense of humour, and, like Captain Walbran, a genuine interest in the people who lived and worked on the coast.

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*Stein: The Way of the River*, by Michael M'Gonigle and Wendy Wickwire. Foreword by David Suzuki. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1988. Pp. 191.

In this book M'Gonigle and Wickwire relate the story of a wilderness conflict which epitomizes the debates over old-growth forest currently proliferating in British Columbia. At the same time, they provide scholarly

insights into topics ranging from the human ecology of an untrammelled watershed to the role of local self-determination in global sustainability. Above all, the consistency of traditional native ways with the integrity of wilderness is the pervasive message.

The book communicates at three levels. Striking photographs, mainly in colour, grace virtually every page, easily qualifying *Stein: The Way of the River* for “coffee table” status. A pictorial browse through the book, reading only captions, would give the reader a first pass at the contents. The sidebars, occupying almost as much space as the text, contain a wealth of information, usually in the form of excerpts from archival sources, both diagrammatic and textual. And the text itself, while occasionally emotive, expresses a detailed academic understanding of the Stein Valley’s history, culture, geography, and politics which is conveyed in language that the layperson can comprehend. The only element that may stymie the general reader is the unexplained use of special symbols in the spelling of native names. To enhance the value of the book as a reference source, it should also include a subject and name index and perhaps a bibliography or reading list.

In setting out to express their sense of the wholeness that characterizes the Stein Rivey Valley, the authors faced the organizational dilemma of having to divide into chapters a picture which is essentially indivisible. The solution was found in the structuring of the book’s contents around two intertwining themes: the fate of the community of Kumsheen at the junction of the Thompson and Fraser rivers, and the situation of the Stein wilderness itself.

The story of Kumsheen is bittersweet. For thousands of years before the arrival of white people, the Nlaka’pamux Indians lived in tune with nature through a five-season cycle. Their lives were comfortable, and they were entirely self-sufficient. Spirituality and subsistence intertwined in their almost year-round use of the Stein River watershed. The marks left by this use were superficial with regard to their ecological impact, but profound in their cultural significance. Rock paintings made by young people during their rites of puberty and by shamans are world-class in archaeological terms and still hold a powerful force in the view of the native people who maintain the related spiritual traditions. M’Gonigle and Wickwire interpret the anthropological history of the area with sensitivity, giving equal treatment to native myth and scientific record.

The seventy years following white contact — a blink of the eye in the time frame of the Nlaka’pamux heritage — saw a radical transformation of both culture and environment. White trade in primary resources such

as fur and gold, following decimation of native communities by smallpox, left the Indians distanced from their traditions and dependent on an unfamiliar and remote economy. Staples and dependency theories are used to explain how, under the now dominant white economy, one cycle of boom and bust followed another until every riverbed and mountain valley in the Nlaka'pamux territory had been mined, trapped, roaded, and logged, except the Stein Valley. On the doorstep of this last wilderness, "neglected by the dominant society, the native community has remained, living where its forebears have always lived, still wedded to its place at Kumsheen" (123).

Part Two of the book, on the natural history and biophysical attributes of the watershed, is given a human perspective by means of a series of sidebars that contain Adam Klein's account of a trapping season in the Stein with Young Easter Hicks in 1925 and by the description of the Stein environment as it would be seen by a hiker travelling through the watershed. Indeed, while ecosystem integrity and diversity is the main theme of Part Two, the wilderness hiker's perspective is central. The recreational use of the watershed is seen as consistent with ecosystem values, while potential logging is described as a threat to both.

The case against logging is further developed in Part Three, which addresses the current Stein land-use controversy and associated planning processes. Throughout, arguments against forestry are solidly built, but attention to the views of the forestry-based community is noticeable by its absence. The pro-logging "Share the Stein" group is, to be sure, mentioned, but only in terms of its connection with the large companies which encourage it. The authors, long-time activists in the "save" movement, remain unapologetic in their emphasis on the wilderness cause.

Part Four, "The Journey Ahead," makes the book more than a lament for times past and a condemnation of unwise and exploitative decisions. In these last chapters the authors delineate a constructive alternative to logging in the Stein Valley with a sound economic, social, and ecological rationale. They call for a diversified and self-sufficient local economy based on tourism, intensive forestry in areas outside the Stein Valley, and value-added processing of wood. More efficient, less wasteful forestry in areas already developed, the authors maintain, would more than compensate the loss of timber values in the Stein. These are the kinds of alternatives that the forest industry likely will have to implement as it reaches the end of its old-growth supplies. M'Gonigle and Wickwire make the case for implementing them now, while there is still time to include places like the Stein in a wilderness mosaic, extending throughout B.C. and the world.

From an academic perspective, *Stein: The Way of the River* is perhaps not sufficiently objective — after all, the avowed purpose of the book is to present the case for saving the Stein. Yet the bias is neither simplistic nor predictable. The authors are not *for* native people and *against* whites; neither are they *for* wilderness and *against* development. Forestry proposals are condemned, in the final analysis, as much for their potential to put the community through yet another cycle of boom and bust as for their incompatibility with the spiritual, ecological, and wilderness values of the watershed. The peoples, processes, and relationships which are consistently supported by the authors are those which sustain the integrity of Kumsheen and the Stein Valley. And the conservation of the Stein is supported not only because of a concern to preserve the intangible qualities appreciated by the native people “from time immemorial” and by more recently enamoured recreationists. There is also a central interest in cultural, economic, and political benefits which, in the words of the authors, “we are only beginning to understand.” “A deeper level of knowledge,” they assert, “is essential for the survival of a world so out-of-balance with the life forces which sustain it” (180), and the source of this knowledge is in native wisdom and in the wilderness itself.

*Stein: The Way of the River* would have enduring relevance whether or not the valley is saved. Yet with spokespersons like M’Gonigle and Wickwire, the grassroots movement working for the protection of the Stein River Valley surely will not be stopped. Chief Ruby Dunstan of the Lytton and Mt. Currie Indian people, whose preface to the book supports the sustainable use of the valley as envisioned by the authors, has received the endorsement of her people through re-election. Corporate forestry interests must realize that they can get like support from the people of B.C. at large only if they too support the integrity of this inspirational watershed. Action by Fletcher Challenge to follow a one-year moratorium on the Stein Valley suggests that such a realization is at hand.

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